

The Baptist Record

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Father now ministers where his daughter died

By Linda Lawson

RENO, Nev. (BP) — At 9 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 16, 1992, Mike and Sarah McCullough — exhausted, grieved, but by a miracle of God's grace, at peace — sat by a bed in the Washoe Medical Center's pediatric intensive care unit in Reno, Nev.

They held their blonde, 9-year-old daughter, Maggie, as the last vestiges of life slipped from her comatose body and her heartbeat slowed and then stopped.

Today in the same children's ICU where Maggie died, McCullough spends a few hours as a volunteer chaplain each Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and at other times as needed.

He encourages and comforts parents and family members of sick and injured children. He

stands with doctors and nurses when they have to tell a family there is no hope. He asks medical staff members how he can pray for them.

His is a calming, encouraging ministry of presence.

The journey from father of a dying child to chaplain among parents with similar agonies has been a road of claiming God's promise that it is possible to walk and not faint.

Two and a half years after Maggie's death, Mike, Sarah, and 9-year-old Jackson McCullough now sometimes know what it is like to run and not grow weary.

"We're still looking to the day when we'll soar again," McCullough, director of mission ministries for the Nevada Baptist

Convention, reflected on a sunny April morning, claiming the promise of Isaiah 40:31.

Retelling Maggie's story had brought tears that come less frequently now but still symbolize that the pain, while less acute, will always be part of their lives.

Maggie's dying began Oct. 10 when she entered the hospital with a high fever and a rash. As doctors struggled to identify the problem, she slipped into a coma.

As her liver and other blood organs shut down, a transplant was proposed and then eliminated when brain damage became evident.

The McCulloughs believe they received a word from God Monday at noon when they came to believe that Maggie would die, though they never stopped praying that she would be healed and restored to their family.

Their awareness of Maggie's impending death did not indicate "a lack of faith," he emphasized. "God gave us those days to be ready."

Sarah McCullough surprised Mike by saying she wanted Maggie to be buried beside his mother near Bryan, Texas.

"I know it doesn't matter, but I don't want her to be alone," was Sarah's reasoning. That was reason enough, the family agreed.

Thursday night, exhausted, they left family members at Maggie's bedside and went home to their son, then 6.

They returned to the hospital at 5:30 a.m. Friday. Less than four hours later, "We were able to hand our girl back to the Lord," he said.

In the weeks and months that followed, the McCulloughs grieved

together and separately.

Sarah's deepest moments of pain were triggered by the clock or calendar — the Sunday night when they left Maggie in a coma at the hospital, her birthday, and other specific occasions.

Mike, on the other hand, had dark days when the pain of missing Maggie was so intense he couldn't go to the office or, if at work, just sat at his desk.

Knowing that eight of 10 marriages end within two years after the death of a child, Mike and Sarah "made a deliberate choice that we wouldn't be part of that statistic. We worked hard to be open. We're extra patient," he said.

They sought family counseling, receiving assurance they were doing the right things to move toward recovery. They set up a foundation to provide funds to enable ministers to pay health insurance premiums for themselves and their families.

Eight or nine months after Maggie's death, McCullough began again to pray that God would show him a place of service where he could make a difference as a chaplain.

His prayer was answered when he returned to the children's ICU in November 1993, this time as a chaplain.

"It's where I belong," McCullough said. "I'm comfortable there. If I'm not at home, I'd rather be there. I don't see Maggie there. I feel blessed about that."

ICU director Nancy Harland praised McCullough's ministry.

"We as nurses don't have the ability to truly feel what the parents do. Mike does. Knowing he's



Maggie Erin McCullough

coming makes us feel better because we know the family truly will be cared for," she said.

"We need as much as they (families) do sometimes," said Becky Bunker, day shift supervisor. "When Mike walks in, he knows if the nurses need help."

McCullough said his way of reaching out to hospital staff has changed from his early days when he asked how they were feeling. Now he asks if there is anything in their lives he can pray about.

"I think that has made a difference," he said.

Mike and Sarah are proud of Jackson's progress in working through his own grief.

"In his mind Maggie was perfect," Sarah said. "He loves for us to tell Maggie stories, especially ones that show she was not perfect."

"And she wasn't perfect, but she was wonderful," she added.

Lawson writes for the Baptist Sunday School Board.



RENO, Nev. — Mike McCullough (second from right), a volunteer chaplain in the children's intensive care unit at Washoe Medical Center in Reno, Nev., prays with Dana Mattson (right), mother of Cody, a child injured in an automobile accident, as medical personnel treat her son. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

Classic Baptists

Spiritual giants from 150 years of Southern Baptist life are being introduced to a new generation of churchgoers with a 12-volume series of hardback books from Broadman and Holman, the publishing division of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. The first volume in *The Library of Christian Classics* series, available now, contains "Pay Day Some Pay" and several other sermons by the legendary R.G. Lee, the late pastor of Bellevue Church in Memphis and three-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Timothy George, general editor of the series and dean of the Beeson School of Divinity at Samford University in Birmingham, described the books as "great classic works that have proven their value over the years and which we think still speak with power and relevance to the life of the church today. As we think about forging a faithful future under the lordship of Jesus Christ, I don't think we can do that if we simply start from scratch." George said each volume will include study aids and an introduction that explains the book's historical setting.

Media trend?

News media observers are hopeful that the expanded religion section being launched by the *Dallas Morning News* is a signal that secular media are beginning to recognize the value of religion in the lives of their readers. "It's a wonderful improvement over the meager space offered by most newspapers," said evangelist Billy Graham. Veteran religion editor Helen Parmley pushed for the expanded religion section for years before her retirement in 1992 and her successor, Dan Cattau, felt the same way, said managing editor Bob Mong. "We concentrated on developing the rest of the paper, but we had a strong, lingering feeling that we needed to do something about an institutional commitment to religion news coverage," he recalled. A 1994 readership poll and a far-reaching study by former Southern Baptist Convention president Jimmy Allen convinced executives at the newspaper to give the new section a try. "As we concentrate more seriously on a subject, we develop more stories for the whole paper. I believe this leads us to think more about the spiritual component of news events," Mong said.

Looking Back...

10 years ago

Skene native Lewis Myers is tapped by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to head the newly-created Cooperative Services International office, which will seek to work in countries not open to missionary-sending programs.

20 years ago

Yellow Leaf Church, Lafayette Association, honors member Zola Fudge for 56 years of unbroken service teaching Sunday School in the mornings, Training Union in the evenings, and weekly GA and WMU activities.

50 years ago

The Mississippi Baptist Hospital in Jackson reports that nearly 9,000 patients were admitted last year to the facility, which is now estimated to be worth over \$656,000 — including buildings, equipment, and real estate.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Christian citizenship

There are tough decisions to be made when you think of conduct and Christianity. There are those who believe the Christian ought to be meek and mild and to be shoved around by whomever is doing the shoving. He should stay out of politics, never raise his voice, nor take to the street over any issue. The Christian is to be the doormat of the world and bear the footprints gladly of those who walk over him.

At the opposite extreme is the militant believer. He is out to reveal his convictions, and pity the poor fellow in his way. The kingdom cometh with the sword, or the ballot, or whatever is handy. He is to out-fox the savvy politician and place his impress on the face of society. They are ever wanting to nail their "95 theses" to the door of the capitol.

Interwoven into these two attitudes is a mixture of politics, culture, and regionalism. You love your country, but God is to have the main allegiance. Liberals have dumped all "religionists" into one boat and hope someone will torpedo it. Ultra-conservatives have condemned all who will not march on Washington.

G.K. Chesterton said, "The danger when men stop believing in God is not that they believe in nothing, but that they will

believe in anything."

Cal Thomas, in *The Things That Matter Most*, observes that "opinion polls have replaced the Ten Commandments as our standard. A few years ago most people thought it a good idea to shield children from the baser things such as foul language, sex before marriage, and life without God."

We are considered more "intelligent" today, and feel it essential that the baser things be considered normal, that they should be a part of our education system. The nobler things such as the God concept are to be placed where the baser things once were.

California pastor David Jeremiah has written *Invasion of Other Gods, The Seduction of New Age Spirituality*. The "Aquarian Conspiracy" with its lingo and anti-Christian influence has not gone away. Instead it has covertly invaded churches, schools, and personal lives.

Meanwhile, Hollywood has swept over Silicon Valley and "made for computer" productions are in the offing. Across the aisle the Christian Coalition, with charismatic leadership, has what *U.S. News and World Report* calls "millions of foot soldiers, full collection plates, and a Republican Congress" (April 24 issue). They believe their hour has come. With

half of all evangelicals living in the South, they plan their strategy accordingly.

Even *Newsweek*, in a Feb. 6 article titled, "Return of Shame," says: "Americans are fed up with everything from teen pregnancy to drunk drivers. How do we restore a sense of right and wrong?"

It is evident that many Christians are uncomfortable with the blatant liberalism in the dark hats and the Christian Coalition style conservatism in the white hats.

Retired U.S. Senate Chaplain Richard Halverson observes, "When salt is doing its work, it's not visible." He maintains that an invasion of secularism into the church has caused it to embrace secular criteria for "success" — that which can be seen (*Christianity Today*, Jan. 9 issue).

So what kind of public face will we place on our Christianity — the "turning over the money changers' tables" attitude, or the salt theory? There is an element of truth in both.

Add to this the separation of the wheat and the chaff, and somewhere we have to confront 1 Corinthians 13: You can do all the above but "without love it is nothing." Religion-dominated politics or political-dominated religion — wherein is the mind of Christ?



THE FRAGMENTS

On guard

In Russia many years ago, a certain czar came upon a sentry standing at attention in a secluded spot in the palace gardens.

"Sentry, what are you guarding?" inquired the czar.

"I do not know, sire," the guard replied. "I was ordered to my post by the captain."

Calling the captain of the guard to him, the czar questioned him concerning the sentry's post. The captain could only reply that regulations called for a sentry at that particular spot. No man present knew why he was to guard that spot.

Determined to find the reason for such an unusual post, the czar ordered the archives to be searched. Finally it was learned that Catherine the Great many years before had planted a rosebush there, and ordered a sentry to guard it so no one would trample on it. The rose-

bush had been dead more than a hundred years, but the sentries still kept watch — not knowing why (*Cheer magazine*).

Do you ever feel like you are standing guard over the wrong thing, in the wrong place, and at the wrong time?

Imagine guarding a tradition, a sacred place, or anything which has been dead for centuries. There supposedly are families who are still cutting off part of the ham prior to baking; mother and her mother always did that. Of course, grandmother's pan was not as large. She had to cut off part of the ham.

At one time, automobiles had running boards but no headlights. Who would be foolish enough to drive at night? Progress continues its march. Soon your children will be asking, "Dad, what is a typewriter?" — GH

Guest Opinion...

Lo, the "poor" accompanists

Editor's Note: The following article by editor emeritus Don McGregor originally appeared as an editorial in the Aug. 13, 1987, issue of The Baptist Record. At the request of some of our readers, we are re-printing this timely piece.

Now that budget time has rolled around again, there is a matter that I have been promoting for 25 years, though not with much success. The time has come again, however, so I'll make another stab at it.

I learned a long time ago that the song leader, whatever he or she might be called, does not lead the congregational singing. What he or she does is to lead the pianist, who does lead the congregational singing. If there are both a pianist and an organist, then the music director needs to keep them together. But they lead the singing.

This has been presented in order to call attention to the contribution that the instrumentalists make to church services. Yet in many instances they do not get paid. Some will say that they should donate their talents to the Lord, but

that should be the case no more than with the preacher and the music director. Some will say, as some have said in my church, that the instrumentalists should no more expect pay than do the Sunday School teachers. But Sunday School teachers aren't faced with years of expensive lessons and much practice in order to be able to do the job well.

There is one simple point to this piece, and it is a message that I have been preaching for many years. That is that the organists and pianists in churches should have some remuneration for what they do. They have spent long hours in lessons and in practice to be able to serve in their capacities. They have to practice what they plan to do in the services. They have to practice with the choir. And they are expected to be at choir practice and at the worship services just as the preachers and the music directors are.

They should be rewarded.

Make no mistake. They love what they are doing and will do it without pay, as is exhibited in hun-

dreds of churches everywhere. The preachers and music directors love what they are doing, too. But there are few instances when they don't get paid.

The reason is that we are a platform-oriented society. We are used to paying for what we see. The preacher and the music director are highly visible people in the church services, so we have no qualms about paying them. The instrumentalists usually work behind the scenes. About the only time they are doing anything by themselves is during the offering and before and after services. And always at those times there is something else going on also.

The instrumentalists literally hold the service together. They fill in the blank spots with music. They modulate the music to move it up or down as the needs indicate. They create moods of meditation, joy, dedication, and commitment as the needs for such arise.

Media attention, of course, is always on the visible people on the platform when services are being broadcast or covered for

some reason for news items. And this piece would not at all attempt to say that those who are visible and active on the platform are not important. Perhaps they are the most important people there.

There are, however, some other very important people on the scene who need to be recognized and rewarded in a suitable fashion.

They are the instrumentalists.

In many instances they have been called to their tasks just as have others who are routinely paid for their services. Many times they are called earlier in life, for they

are able to make distinctive contributions at an earlier age. They begin preparing for what they do as early as five years of age and never quit seeking improvement. It is not unusual for a keyboard person to spend 50-60 years in a highly specialized service to a church.

The fact that the instrumentalists many times come from the church membership is no reason that they should not be paid. They are rendering the same service whether they were members of that church or came from somewhere else.

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Merger of Foundation draws protests from major investors

ATLANTA (ABP) — Should the Executive Committee, which already oversees the Southern Baptist Convention's \$137 million annual budget, be allowed to manage another \$167 million in investments that benefit Baptist work?

That is at stake in the plan to dissolve the Southern Baptist Foundation, the SBC's investment service, and give its assets and

assignment to the powerful Executive Committee. It's all part of the massive restructuring of the denomination proposed by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by the Executive Committee.

Although the Foundation produces about \$10 million a year in income for SBC agencies and other Baptist causes, its work goes on largely unheralded. Talk of its

elimination has ignited no firestorms of protest among Southern Baptists, who are more concerned with how the proposed restructuring affects the Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist mission work.

But the proposal has caught the attention of the Foundation's best customers — the 32 state Baptist foundations, which account for

almost half of the money invested through the national agency.

"We do not believe that combining the board of directors of the Southern Baptist Foundation with that of the Executive Committee will serve the best interests of Southern Baptists," wrote Robert Ross, president of the Association of Baptist Foundations, in a letter to SBC leaders April 5.

The state foundations were set up to help Baptists and others invest their money, such as through wills and trusts, and distribute the income, usually to Baptist causes. Some of those state foundations — at least the larger ones — manage their own assets. But most invest at least some money in investment programs operated by the SBC Foundation. Some of the smaller state foundations are administered almost completely by the SBC Foundation.

There are other concerns:

— That the Executive Committee will be tempted to use Foundation investment decisions to pursue its own moral or political agenda. Last year the committee tried to withhold funds from the SBC Annuity Board until that agency could guarantee it was not investing in any companies that endorse abortion.

— That replacing the Foundation's current trustees with Executive Committee members will deprive the institution of experi-

enced money managers and financial experts, one key to its past success.

Morris Chapman, president of the Executive Committee, said such fears are unfounded. "Southern Baptists have always been careful not to empower any one entity with authority over other entities," said Chapman, the SBC's chief executive. "The Executive Committee understands that it exists to serve our churches across the country and to be a facilitator among the SBC entities. Nothing in the report gives any added power or leverage."

Executive Committee chairman Fred Wolfe conceded that the authority to recommend an agency's budget does represent tremendous power and influence, but the Executive Committee has had that all along, he said. The restructuring grants "no less power or no more power" to the Executive Committee, said Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church in Mobile, Ala.

In a response to Ross' letter, Wolfe assured the state foundations that, according to the SBC's attorney, a merger of the Foundation with the Executive Committee is "legally doable." And he added: "I am certain we can depend upon Southern Baptists to send to the Executive Committee qualified trustees who have financial expertise," he said.

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Lewis asks restructure delay; Chapman issues response

ATLANTA (BP) — The president of the Home Mission Board has called for a delay in consideration of the proposed SBC restructuring due to concerns about its impact on home missions, although he is not opposed to "95%" of the proposal.

Larry Lewis' observations are contained in a 12-page memorandum sent May 25 to Home Mission Board directors. The restructuring proposal will be submitted to the Southern Baptist Convention which meets June 20-22 in Atlanta.

"I recommend the report be referred back to the SBC Executive Committee for further study, including cost estimates, savings projections, and impact of proposed changes and possible revisions," Lewis wrote in the memo.

Should the report be submitted to the convention rather than referred back, Lewis wrote, "It is imperative that messengers have the opportunity to consider amendments to the report... (which) will change the nature of Southern Baptist work for generations." Some observers have speculated that amendments from the floor may be ruled out of order, Lewis wrote. (See article at right.)

The proposed restructuring calls for combining into one agency the work of the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and Radio and Television Commission. Lewis focused his

comments on ramifications of that aspect of the report. He told Baptist Press he does not oppose creation of the new North American Mission Board (NAMB), however, "there has been no impact study to determine if, in fact, this is feasible. No one has estimated the cost of such a venture or projected what, if any, savings would be realized."

Proposed changes in the Home Mission Board's relationships with state Baptist conventions have "the potential for the most serious repercussions," according to Lewis.

"Some of the greatest needs for HMB assistance are in the South," he wrote. SBC membership and number of congregations are not keeping pace with population growth in southern states, and "work among ethnics and African Americans is even more pioneer in the South than the North," Lewis said.

Lewis also criticized the proposal for calling for greater emphasis on direct missions and less on working cooperatively with state conventions.

"It would be tragic for the HMB to return to the ineffective, inefficient, confusing methods of the past when cooperative missions has served us so well these past 30 years."

Prior to the 1960s, according to Lewis, the HMB and state conventions maintained separate mission

delivery systems. He said the work was "overlapping and competitive... at tremendous expense and frustration." Cooperative agreements between states and the HMB provide for joint strategy and funding of missions personnel and projects, Lewis explained.

The restructuring proposal also calls for the new home missions agency to "appoint, approve, support, and equip career missions personnel." Lewis took exception to the implication that home missions will no longer use short-term personnel.

Lewis also expressed his desire that the report contain "a strong affirmation for WMU and a word of appreciation for their illustrious history of mission support. Also, a word of encouragement for their continued support would certainly be appropriate."

The reorganization calls for creation of a Great Commission Council to "advise the Convention and its Executive Committee concerning mission issues, needs, and advance." Lewis said this is the role of the board of directors of the mission agencies, not an inter-agency council.

Lewis asked if the council would assume an "authoritative role, usurping the tasks of the Boards, and binding the two mission agencies to the SBC Executive Committee?" He said he was not opposed to a joint mission (See LEWIS on page 10)

Henry: Messengers will have opportunity to discuss PSSC

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP) — The president of the Southern Baptist Convention plans for open discussion of the sweeping recommendation for SBC restructuring during the SBC annual meeting June 20-22 in Atlanta.

In a telephone interview with Jim Henry, at his First Church, Orlando, Fla., office, the **Baptist and Reflector**, newjournal of the Tennessee Convention, was told by Henry no one had asked him to handle the recommendation "one way or another."

"I want to give the people opportunity to discuss the recommendation and to ask questions," Henry said. The recommendation, from a committee of seven men and approved by the SBC Executive Committee in February, would greatly change several SBC agencies, eliminate some, and give new assignments to others. The most opposition concerns a perceived overlooking of WMU's

role in missions offerings promotion while giving those responsibilities to the Foreign and Home Mission boards, which are being renamed the International and North American mission boards, respectively.

Henry said, "My heart is that the messengers will have every opportunity to discuss freely the proposals from the Program Structure and Study Committee (PSSC)."

Mark Brister, Shreveport, La., pastor and chairman of the Program and Structure Study Committee, in a written statement to the **Baptist and Reflector**, noted the committee "expects the parliamentarians to follow Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised. Hence, once the PSSC report has been brought, there should be time for discussion and a vote."

Brister also noted that the PSSC report "will be brought as a motion in its entirety."

Mississippi's gifts to the Cooperative Program up 8%

Mississippi Baptists gave \$2,175,381 through the Cooperative Program in May, according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which distributes the gifts.

Total Cooperative Program giving for 1995 is \$9,872,083, which is \$736,255, or 8.06%, more than that given in the first five months of 1994.

Pro rata giving is nearly 5% ahead of budget. The pro rata amount through May would be \$9,419,408, which is \$452,675, or 4.81%, ahead. The pro rata budget is figured by taking the total budget, which for 1995 is \$22,606,579, dividing by 12 and multiplying by the number of months elapsed.

Cooperative Program gifts go to Southern Baptist causes in Mississippi and around the world.

SBC CP gifts down for month

NASHVILLE (BP) — Cooperative Program total gifts for the budget year still surpass the previous year but May's gifts fell 20.79% below that month a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

May 1995 gifts totaled \$10,263,441 compared to May 1994 of \$12,956,497, or \$2,693,056 less. But for the eight months of the SBC's fiscal year, the 1994-95 total is \$881,059, or .92%, above the 1993-94 total: \$96,594,318 compared to \$95,713,259.

The May gifts were 9.8% below the \$11,378,310 monthly budget requirement in the SBC Program Allocation Budget for 1994-95 although gifts, year-to-date, are still 6.12%, or \$5,567,832, above the budget requirement. YTD budget gifts are \$96,594,318 compared to budget requirements of \$91,026,486. The SBC's budget for the year is \$136,539,730.

Designated gifts for May were 22.44%, or \$3,827,564, below May of last year: \$13,229,312 compared to \$17,056,876. Designated gifts, year-to-date, slipped 1.54%, or \$1,654,275, below the comparable period a year ago: \$105,783,954 compared to \$107,438,230.

Southern Baptists at crossroads of past success, future challenge

ATLANTA (ABP) — Will the remarkable growth of the Southern Baptist Convention during its first century and a half carry over to its future?

When Southern Baptists gather June 20-22 to celebrate their history and consider a plan to retool their organization for the next century, they will begin to answer that question.

No one has a crystal ball. But historians cite Baptists' ability to adapt to changing times as a key to the denomination's past successes. However, they also warn of unprecedented challenges, both internal and external, that could diminish the convention's potential.

Mark Brister, chairman of a blue-ribbon committee proposing the reorganization of the SBC, said the denomination is at "an exciting transition moment in history." The SBC "has great strengths and a bright future," he said.

Alluding to the convention's embrace of a more-conservative theology during the 1980s, Brister contrasted the SBC to declining liberal denominations "which have veered from biblical Christianity."

Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said the SBC in 1995 is "poised for growth after a sustained period of conflict and transition."

The "conservative resurgence" beginning in 1979 was the "equivalent of organizational surgery," involving pain but "opening the way for a much healthier convention in the years to come," Mohler said. "Put bluntly, the theological issues which formed the center of the conservative resurgence are absolutely vital to the integrity of the convention," he said.

Not everyone, however, views the changes in the convention as progress. Along the way, says historian Walter Shurden, the denomination has sacrificed bedrock Baptist distinctives related to freedom of conscience. "I think there's a sense where the SBC has been de-

Baptistified in the last 15 years," said Shurden, chair of the Christianity Department at Mercer University in Macon, Ga.

Morris Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, credits the theological "course correction" for the denomination's health. Without it, he said, "we would find ourselves adrift as we head into the next century. Now the sails are set."

"We are strong but we're not perfect," Chapman said. "Our health depends on our willingness to abandon self for the sake of Christ." Chapman said the denomination "has great promise" but must "overcome the temptation to become lethargic," must "continue to personalize missions," and must reach out beyond the Bible Belt.

Mohler, who served on the committee that drafted the SBC's restructuring plan, described four challenges facing the SBC: To maintain theological integrity, uphold biblical morality, focus on the denomination's mission, and accept the need for structural change.

Countered Shurden: "I think the SBC is going to be all right institutionally in terms of statistics, but statistics don't tell us anything about vitality."

The SBC is one of the success stories of American religion, said Jesse Fletcher, author of a new sesquicentennial history of the Southern Baptist Convention published by Broadman & Holman.

Among the challenges, according to experts interviewed by Associated Baptist Press, are:

— Women. Many Baptists employ a literal reading of the Bible that prohibits women from serving in some leadership roles in churches. This pits them against the larger movement in society in which doors are opening to all persons, regardless of gender.

Fletcher cited two recent episodes involving conflict over the roles of women in church life. One is a decision by Mohler to make opposition to women pastors a condition of employment at Southern Seminary. The other is suspicion by SBC leaders of the fact that its auxiliary, Woman's Missionary Union, remains autonomous.

Both issues have to be resolved for the convention to move forward in a healthy way, Fletcher said.

Shurden noted: "One of the big challenges for the SBC in the future is to devise some attraction for women who feel God has called them into ministry." He predicted the SBC will eventually be forced to accept women in religious roles.

"That is a moral and ethical issue that has to do with the inclusion of human beings into the full community of faith," he said. "I just can't help but believe in time that truth will triumph." However, he confessed, "I don't see it any time in the immediate future."

— Exclusivism. The conven-

tion's long battle between conservatives and moderates has discouraged dissent and resulted in a leadership more monolithic than in the past.

"The big question is: Is the convention becoming exclusive when the gospel by definition is inclusive?" Fletcher said. In most religious bodies, dissent "usually represents an awful lot of the vitality," he observed.

"I think that one of the biggest dangers is we're going to exclude too many of the people we need to address many of the challenges of the new age," Fletcher said.

In the closing chapter of his book, Fletcher assesses three "foundations for the future" for the SBC: confessionalism or theological consensus; connectionalism, the way churches relate to each other through associational and convention structures; and cooperation, common values and goals. "We need to appreciate that's what we've built on," he said.

Fletcher then identifies nine "fault lines" in that foundation: Calvinism vs. Arminianism; society methodology vs. Convention methodology; local church vs. larger body; scholarship vs. populism; gender roles vs. gender equality; the perspectives represented by the SBC's two dominant seminaries, Southern and Southwestern; orthodox vs. progressive thinking; fundamentalism vs. evangelicalism; and pastoral authority vs. democratic church leadership.

"De-Baptistification" is Walter Shurden's word for the loss of Baptist identity. The challenge for Southern Baptists, he said, is to recover the hallmark Baptist doctrines of anti-creedalism, the priesthood of believers, and the centrality of laity in Baptist life.

"The Baptist identity has really been crowded out by the fundamentalist identity of the SBC leadership," Shurden said. "I think that right now the leadership of the SBC gets their identity not from Baptist life but from fundamentalist life."

"One of the challenges of the next generation is to move away from a fundamentalist identity and restore a Baptist identity," Shurden said.

— Post-denominationalism. Baby boomers are less loyal to institutions — including religious institutions — than their parents, sociologists say. Much of the denominational loyalty Southern Baptists counted on, to fill offering plates and pulpits, for instance, is lost.

"I think every generation has to develop new ways to relate to its constituency," Fletcher said. "I don't think loyalties just carry over any more."

The challenge of evangelizing the cities is made more difficult by the "white flight" phenomenon of recent decades, when many Southern Baptist churches abandoned the cities. "Many churches respond to the changes in their community by moving," Fletcher said.



Mississippi's WMU writers

Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) hosted 71 individuals from across the Southern Baptist Convention during its 1995 Writers Conference. The annual event, held May 17-20 at WMU's national headquarters in Birmingham, Ala., provided training for WMU's curriculum writers for 1996-97. Writers from Mississippi included (from left): Kay Cassibry and Pam Keith, both of Jackson; and Barbara Wilkinson of Brandon. (WMU photo by Dan Bryan)

Summer time, family time...

Central Hills schedules RA, Challenger weeks

Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko is offering week-long resident camp sessions for boys entering grades 4-12.

The campers may be enrolled in a Royal Ambassador or Challenger unit in a local church. However, this is not a requirement for participation in the camping program.

Space is available during each camp session. Dates and spaces available as of May 29 are: June 19-23, 128; June 26-30, 101; July 10-14, 73; July 17-21, 34; and July 24-28, 80. The camp sessions begin at 10 a.m. on Monday and end with lunch on Friday.

The registration fee for each camper is \$90, which provides lodging, meals, snacks, craft projects, and simple "first expense" sickness/accident insurance.

The campers will participate in Bible study, missions study, worship services, swimming in a pool, canoeing on a lake, horseback trail riding, archery, riflery target practice, camp craft skills instruction, adventure/challenge ropes course, hand crafts, and leisure games.

Younger campers will be housed in two-person tents with nearby bath houses. There will be 10 campers and two staffers in each chapter living area. Electricity is available only in the bath houses. Older campers will be housed in the lodge building. Each bunk room houses 14 campers and two staffers.

Overnight Lad-Dad Weekend Camp sessions are planned for boys entering grades 1-3 and their dads. If a dad cannot arrange to come with his son, another man may come to camp with him. Any boy and his dad can register for a camp session at Central Hills.

The dates and spaces available as of May 29 for Lad-Dad Weekend Camps are June 23-24, 58;

and July 14-15, 63. The camp sessions begin at 3 p.m., Friday and end with lunch, Saturday.

The registration fee for each camper is \$24. A registration form must be completed by each lad and each dad. The fee provides lodging, meals, and simple "first expense" sickness/accident camp insurance.

The snack shop will be open at designated times.

The younger campers will participate in many of the basic activities as the older campers. Dads will lead the horses while lads ride the trails. Lads and dads will camp in tents.

Registration forms for both types of camps are available from Central Hills Baptist Retreat, P.O. Box 723, Kosciusko, MS 39090-0723. Telephone: (601) 289-9730.

Killinger claims Beeson discrimination, files suit

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) — A faculty member at Samford University is suing the Baptist school in Birmingham, Ala., alleging religious discrimination and broken promises have kept him from teaching in the Beeson Divinity School.

In a lawsuit filed last December in United States District Court, Professor John Killinger alleges Beeson Dean Timothy George has refused to let him teach courses in the divinity school because Killinger is a theological moderate.

"The Beeson Divinity School is not interdenominational, but instead advocates the theology, liturgy, and biblical interpretation of the fundamentalist wing of the Southern Baptist Convention,"

the suit alleges.

George's actions violate the terms of the Ralph Waldo Beeson will that established the divinity school, Killinger alleges. Beeson, a Birmingham philanthropist, left \$19.3 million to Samford for the creation and establishment of a divinity school that is "Protestant Christian, evangelical, and interdenominational."

The school "is a fundamentalist institution which is the antithesis of an interdenominational institution mandated under the terms of the Beeson will," the suit alleges.

Speaking through an assistant, George told Associated Baptist Press he "has nothing negative to say" about Killinger and the case "is presently in the hands of attorneys."

Christian Coalition, leaders clash over agenda

By Pam Parry

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition unveiled a new legislative agenda designed "to strengthen families and restore common-sense values" during a May 17 news conference at the U.S. Capitol.

Among reforms outlined in the 10-point "Contract with the American Family" is a "religious equality amendment" to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment would permit voluntary, student- and citizen-initiated prayer on courthouse lawns, during high-

school graduation ceremonies, and at sporting events, reversing recent judicial rulings that those activities violate the First Amendment.

The agenda also calls for channeling public funds into private and religious schools, defending parental rights against an international children's-rights initiative, and limiting abortions.

"This agenda is not a Christian agenda, a Republican agenda or a special-interest agenda. It is a pro-family agenda that is embraced by the American people, Republican

and Democrat, Christian and Jew, Protestant and Catholic, black and white," said Ralph Reed, executive director of the 1.6-million-member Christian Coalition.

"These proposals are the 10 suggestions, not the Ten Commandments," Reed said. "Today we make no threats, issue no ultimatums, present no demands. This contract is designed to help Congress devise legislation as it tackles a cultural agenda after the first 100 days [of the congressional session]."

Reed called the contract a mainstream agenda. That claim drew an immediate disclaimer from a number of religious leaders at another press conference later in the day.

Reed said religious conservatives have gained "a place at the table, a sense of legitimacy, and a voice in the conversation we call democracy."

Barry Lynn, an ordained minister and executive director of Americans United for Separation

of Church and State, said what Reed really wants is to "saw the legs of the chairs of everybody else at the table."

Disputing Reed's claims that the coalition's agenda is non-sectarian, Lynn said Robertson's group "won't rest until they usher in an officially Christian America."

"The real contract with American families is the Constitution, and we don't need to amend it or do an end-run around it," Lynn said.

Lynn said the contract is nothing more than a payoff to the Christian Coalition for partisan politicking it performed last November, covered with a religious veneer. "Any candidate who fails to back it will be the target of their wrath," he predicted.

Other religious leaders described the contract as "a document of zealotry" that ultimately would "run roughshod over the American family." The panel of

religious leaders speaking against the contract included Baptists, Jews, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians.

Reed said the Christian Coalition spent more than \$1 million to promote the GOP "Contract with America," and this new agenda is the second step. The group is prepared to spend \$2 million on this campaign, he added.

Several GOP congressional leaders and a Democratic congressman expressed support for the contract at the Christian Coalition's press conference. Among them were Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.); GOP presidential hopeful Phil Gramm (R-Texas); and Majority Whips Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and Tom DeLay (R-Texas).

Gingrich said the contract holds "some key values that matter overwhelmingly to most Americans."

Parry writes for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

State CBF chapter holds spring meeting in Laurel

The annual spring meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) of Mississippi was held May 13 at the Ramada Inn in Laurel.

Orthopedic surgeon John McGraw spoke of Paul's thanksgiving as "a state of mind" and urged those attending to be thankful in all circumstances.

Keynote speaker Tom Prevost, a graduate of Mississippi College and Associate Missions Coordinator for the CBF in Atlanta, spoke on the theme of wilderness. Prevost asserted that it is okay to be a minority on the mission field; it is okay to stand by your convictions. He noted that because we have "more access, more tools... and more opportunity than ever before," it is a good time to be on mission. Prevost encouraged Baptists who find themselves on a

dry, sandy, blistering beach to "jump in the water" and assume freedom with responsibility.

Lloyd Allen, president of the Whittsitt Baptist Heritage Society, led a session on Baptist distinctives. He addressed the question of what gives us denominational identity and discussed how theological sources, cultural influences, and organizational structures shape that identity.

Music was presented by Richard Green of Laurel. Tom Mercier of Prentiss led in hymn singing.

Moderator Holly Redford of Clinton announced that Russell Dilday, dean of Truett Seminary in Fort Worth, will be the principal speaker at the fall meeting, scheduled for Oct. 28 at Northminster Church in Jackson.

Advisory committee convened for conference center planning

NASHVILLE (BP) — A blue ribbon committee of Southern Baptist pastors, laypersons, and denominational leaders met May 24-25 at the Baptist Sunday School Board to draft a proposed mission statement for Glorieta (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) conference centers to become a foundation for

improved programming and facilities into the 21st century.

The final draft states: "Glorieta and Ridgecrest Conference Centers will be the first choice for providing spiritual experiences in a Christian atmosphere for all our guests. These life-changing experiences will nurture vibrant faith,

develop effective leaders, encourage healthy families, and mobilize believers for mission and ministry."

Mike Arrington, BSSB executive director for corporate affairs who oversees conference center work, said the statement drafted by the advisory committee will be circulated for input and refinement among conference center, BSSB, and SBC agency personnel who conduct conference center programs.

In addition to Davis, committee members participating in the meeting included: Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Shreveport, La.; Charles Q. Carter, pastor of First Church, Jonesboro, Ga.; Dan Cathy, layman and executive vice president of Chick-Fil-A, Atlanta; Claude Cone, executive director of the Convention of New Mexico; Dan Francis, pastor of First Church, Nashville, Tenn.; Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church, Dallas; and Bill Hall, layman from San Clemente, Calif.

Others were: Kirk Humphreys, president of Century Investments of Oklahoma City and chairman of BSSB trustees; David Maddox, layman from Fullerton, Calif.; Darold Morgan, retired president of the SBC Annuity Board, living in Richardson, Texas; Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville; Bill Tanner, executive director of the General Convention of Oklahoma; June Whitlow, executive vice president of Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala.; and Glenn Wilcox, president of Wilcox Travel, Asheville, N.C.

In addition to Draper and Arrington, eight BSSB leaders served as resource persons to the committee.



Seniors gather at Gulfshore

The senior adult choir of First Church, Raleigh (left photo), led by Jerry Peagler, was one of the featured choirs for the senior adult retreat May 25-27 at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian. The three weeks of senior adult retreats in May were sponsored by the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. James Ray (below left photo, standing) and his wife Mattie, members of First Church, Grenada, led crafts classes that included (seated, from left) Dorothy Thomsen of First Church, Hattiesburg, and Dennis and Gwen Jordan of Bay Vista Church, Biloxi. Levon Moore (below photo, left), retired director of missions for Attala Association, served as retreat pastor for the 700 people who attended the events. He is greeted by Ruth Singleton (second from right) and Laura Hill, both members of Raymond Church, Raymond. (Photos by Tim Nicholas)



Letters to the editor

Saved by grace

Editor:

In response to (Keith) Powell's letter on May 11, concerning the recent comments of Frank Stagg and Herschel Hobbs, I would like to make a few comments.

First, the "mother soil" of the Southern Baptist church has been a muddy interpretation of Calvinism. Theologically, there are three strains of Calvinism: Supralapsarianism, infralapsarianism, and sublapsarianism. The latter variety, presumably, is the one Powell supports. If so, then he is only one step removed from evangelical Arminianism. If not, then Powell's views are more in line with the Westminster Confessions of Faith and the Presbyterian Church.

Secondly, Powell speaks of orthodox churches in his letter. I believe he is referring to reformed churches and not the Catholic traditions of the Eastern and Greek Orthodox churches. Historically, it is true that the Baptist church does have a semi-reformed heritage, but not an orthodox tradition.

Thirdly, if one were to weigh the evidence, verse for verse, covering the entire Scripture concerning those verses that deal with divine election and predestination to those that speak of man's freedom to choose God's abundant grace, the scales would tilt overwhelmingly in favor of the latter. Also, in most cases, the term "elect" refers to believers within a specific church or to the church itself. The apostle John substantiates this claim in 2 John 1:1 and 1:29. Finally, the term predestina-

tion never refers to an individual, but to a plan of redemption made possible by Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-30 and Eph. 1:4-7).

In conclusion, if I were a gambling man, I would put my spiritual money (faith) on 1 Timothy 2:3-6 where it reads, "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth... The man Jesus Christ who gave himself a ransom for all" (NASB).

Andy Brasher, pastor
Como Church
Como

Scripture only

Editor:

I do not know Calvin, C.H. Spurgeon, William Carey, Boyce, or others I read about. But I do know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now read what God says in the Bible about election. See what God says in Romans 8:28-30. Look at verse 28 to see who are "them who are called." Verse 28 tells us "them that love God," it is not them that do not love him. From verse 30 "whom he did predestinate"; verse 28, "them that love God," was also whom he called, justified, and glorified. God makes it clear in Ephesians 1:1-12 who the chosen ones are. He says in verse 4 "he has chosen us." Us who? See verse 1, "the saints and the faithful."

Why were we chosen? "That we should be holy... before him, in love." Why did he predestinate us (v. 5)? The answer is in verses 6 and 12: "to the praise and glory of his grace." We are chosen "... in him before the foundation of the

world" (vv. 3-4). Jesus Christ (Messiah) was foreordained before the foundation of the world. God "elected" (v. 2) the believer of 1 Peter 1:1.

One more time, why did God elect believers? See Romans 8:29: "to be conformed to the image of his Son." Believe all the Bible says about predestination, nothing anyone else says.

David Norris, pastor
White Oak Church
Magee

Regrets compromise

Editor:

The "Soup-R-Bowl" Sunday letter from M.L. Jones closed with the question, "Maybe we are compromising?"

I began my ministry just 12 years after the end of World War II. This was in the deep Bible Belt of south Georgia. When revival time came around, we would have a week or more of "cottage prayer services" prior to meeting time. Our services went from Sunday through the next Saturday night. Then someone said, "That's too many prayer meetings," and we compromised; then three days of prayer. Then someone else said, "A whole week of services was too much," so we compromised and gave Satan Saturday night. Then with our fast-paced society, five days was too many meetings, so we compromised again, and now there are three.

Yes, I guess I have lived the life of a compromising Southern Baptist preacher. You see, when I began my ministry, teenage unmarried motherhood was not openly accepted, and drugs and alcohol abuse was considered immoral. The prayer (room) was still the prayer room, instead of the supper room. Yes, as I look at the activities of my church today, most of the things we do are evidence of our compromising.

I realize in my reclining years that I was a part of this compromising. Although I am now retired from the pastorate my message is the same: "God never changes, same yesterday, today, and tomorrow." I guess that message too has been compromised, for when I have an opportunity to preach it seems I keep getting less and less return engagements.

Yes, Mr. Jones, we may see, even in our lifetime, the Super Bowl Sunday night be a pizza supper and T.V. football in the family life centers.

God forgive us for our compromises; he didn't compromise.

David Townsend
Purvis

Outrageous faith

Editor:

I am disturbed by the reference to Christianity being described as a reasonable faith. I have seen this in some of our church literature, and I would like to comment on this subject.

Christianity is certainly real but not at all reasonable: Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. This is the most controversial subject among the many religious sects of the world today, certainly not reasonable to anyone today except Christians.

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. This, to a non-believer, is simply impossible and certainly unreasonable.

Jesus Christ lived on earth and performed many miracles, all of which to the unbeliever are impossible and certainly unreasonable.

Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place for our sins that we might have eternal life. To the unbeliever everything must be proven by human reasoning, therefore, this is unacceptable.

Jesus Christ rose from the grave on the third day, victorious over death, hell, and the grave. This certainly isn't reasonable and is the major obstacle to our missionary efforts throughout the world today.

We must remember that when we go as witnesses for Jesus Christ that we must witness to them from our own experiences. We must depend upon the Holy Spirit to convict the unbelieving person of his lost condition and need for salvation. We must depend entirely upon God. It is only through his power that the lost can be converted.

Winning the lost to Christ is the whole duty of the born-again Christian, but we must depend entirely upon the Holy Spirit to convict the lost to come to Jesus. Our only weapon is prayer and witnessing of our own experiences. Human reasoning cannot explain the plan of salvation to a secular world.

Warren D. Fortson
Brandon

Modify the covenant

Editor:

I want to commend the Program and Structure Study Committee for the depth and breadth of its vision embodied in the "Covenant for a New Century." In particular, the call for a more sharply focused strategy in carrying out the Great Commission is awe-inspiring. In one respect, however, I find the proposal deeply flawed. That is in the design to eliminate the Historical Commission of the SBC, allocate one of its services, the Southern Baptist Library and Archives, to the Six Seminary Presidents Council, and a second, Baptist history education efforts, to the Sunday School Board, while leaving the remainder of the Historical Commission's ministries, I suppose, to simply cease their operations.

By splitting the current ministries, the proposal almost certainly mandates increased costs to carry out the continuing ministries and leaves the convention's churches, associations, and state conventions without support

in their efforts to preserve their histories.

It is sadly ironic that in this year of sesquicentennial celebration the convention will vote on a proposal which would gut our efforts to recall how the Holy Spirit has led us in the past and would mandate to oblivion those who valiantly brought us to this point. I encourage all messengers to the convention to support modifying the "Covenant for a New Century" in a way which would preserve intact the Historical Commission and its ministries to the various history needs of Southern Baptists.

Ronald Martin, chairman
SBC Historical Commission
Garden Grove, Calif.

Betrayal of trust

Editor:

The Woman's Missionary Union's long history shows an organization of women with a passion for missions: the beginning of the Weeks of Prayer, the special mission offerings, the early children's homes, mission centers, ministerial relief and annuity, and even Vacation Bible School. The majority of our missionaries, past and present, men and women, are products of WMU (remember when WMU had RAs?). WMU has kept missions alive in the hearts and minds of Southern Baptists and has no other agenda today.

It seems, however, that the more WMU has conceded its projects and innovations to the other entities of the Southern Baptist Convention (Baptist Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board, Brotherhood, etc.) the more the present leadership of the Convention wants. Read the insert in the July issues of *Royal Service*, *Contempo*, or the July-August-September issue of *Dimension*, which talks about a "covenant for a new century." This covenant to be voted on at the Atlanta SBC meeting in June leaves out WMU and assigns to others work WMU has traditionally done.

Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director, while asking for an amendment to the covenant to include WMU and being denied this, has remained a lady and a Christian stateswoman, even in the latest debacle with the Foreign Mission Board. It seems that when the FMB was sweet-talking WMU and assuring her that nothing had changed in their relationship regarding the offerings, they were all the while surreptitiously trying to get for themselves the Lottie Moon Offering trademark from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, even though throughout the 100-year existence of the offering, WMU had never seen the need to patent it. This act is a betrayal of a century-old trust that no amount of apologizing by the FMB can undo.

Mary Jane Nethery
Tupelo



Jacksonian takes top honors

Elisabeth Wall (right) took top honors in the annual Baptist Speakers Tournament, held April 29 at Alta Woods Church, Jackson. Wall, a member of First, Jackson, will represent Mississippi Baptists during Discipleship Training Week, July 15-21, at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Assembly. Wendy Dunn of First Church, Hattiesburg, placed second in the competition. She has been invited to deliver her speech during Super Summer, July 24-28, at Mississippi College, Clinton. State finalist Billy McLaughlin of Pleasant Home Church, Laurel, has been invited to deliver his speech during the July 6-8 Growing Churches for Tomorrow conference at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian. Chet Estes of First Church, Union, was also a state finalist. The Speakers Tournament is sponsored annually by the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, represented in the photo above by Wes Pegues (left), consultant with the department.

Constitutional issues at stake in school prayer dispute

By Bill Merrell

PONTOTOC (BP) — Multi-colored ribbon bouquets adorn the stretch of State Highway 6 running west out of Tupelo to Pontotoc.

They are accompanied by yard signs proclaiming, "4 Religious Freedom."

A newcomer would probably think, correctly, "Something must be going on here." Pontotoc County, population 23,000, has become the scene of a struggle for religious liberty with national implications. North Pontotoc schools have recognized religious expression rights of its students as far back as anyone can remember. All of that is being challenged now.

Michael Whitehead and the Christian Life Commission (CLC) he serves as general counsel have agreed to assist the school district in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way challenging student-initiated voluntary prayer and an elective Bible history course at North Pontotoc Attendance Center.

The case, *Herdahl vs. Pontotoc School District*, was filed in federal court in Mississippi in December 1994 on behalf of Lisa Herdahl, mother of six children, some of whom entered Pontotoc schools two years ago after the family relocated to the area from Wisconsin.

"Students meet in their homes prior to the beginning of the school day, at which time the prin-

cipal gives announcements," Whitehead recounted. "After the announcements, he has permitted any student or student group to take 2-3 minutes to give announcements, read an inspirational passage or pray. Mrs. Herdahl objected to the practice, but refused offers to excuse her children from the classroom so they would not be exposed to the reading and prayers she found objectionable."

The district judge granted a preliminary injunction against the practice of students' praying and set a trial date for March 1996 to consider making the injunction permanent.

"The order also prohibits teachers from permitting elementary students to say grace together before going to the school cafeteria," Whitehead said. "The order does not yet address the subject of the elective course in Middle Eastern history which uses the Bible as a text."

In the interim, the court has agreed to permit students to assemble in the gym before school for student-led Bible reading or prayer. This practice has not yet been challenged by the ACLU.

The citizenry of the area have rallied in support of the school board, exemplified by a "God and Country" gathering at the Pontotoc Court Square in January, in which 3,500 people sang hymns and heard newly-elected U.S.

Rep. Roger Wicker (R.-Miss.) vow to fight for school prayer with every legal and ethical means at his disposal.

On the Sunday before Memorial Day in the town dotted with hundreds of yard signs and ribbon bouquets, Richard D. Land, CLC executive director, addressed an

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press....

— Amendment I of the Constitution of the United States

early morning religious liberty prayer breakfast and morning worship services at First Church, Pontotoc. "I want you to know that people all across America are praying for you," Land told those in attendance. "Your struggle to

exercise your heritage and your rights as citizens of the United States is an inspiration and an encouragement to many people across the country and it is a symbol of the struggle for the nation's soul."

Encouragement has come to the church and community leaders from many quarters, but not without a mixture of criticism. William Sims, First Church pastor, said, "We have received more than 40,000 letters which are overwhelmingly affirming. We've had about 100 or so that seem to come from an atheistic perspective and oppose what we are doing. Many are so obscene as to be grotesque. I wouldn't even repeat them. One I could repeat wrote, 'God is not the answer, the church is not the answer, and you're surely not the answer. Playboy, sex, and casinos are what America needs. Surely not your God — where is He?'"

The issue will not be decided, however, by the majority viewpoint of students or adults. The case has been described by the *Washington Post* as "the most important prayer case now before the courts." Both sides expect it to address key constitutional questions.

Land addressed one of them at the prayer breakfast: "The two clauses of the First Amendment mean there will be no governmental establishment of religion and... no governmental interference with

the free exercise of religion. There have been times in our past when the greatest danger to the First Amendment was a violation of the 'establishment clause.' That is not the case any longer; it has not been the case for many decades.

"The chief violations of the First Amendment in my lifetime and in yours are government attempts to suppress the free exercise rights of American citizens to express their religious convictions out in the public square or in public institutions. That is what we have been called in our lifetime to defend.

"The question of students praying and expressing their religious convictions in public school is nothing less than a defense of the free exercise clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America.

"Students are American citizens, too, and they do not leave their First Amendment rights to the free exercise of their religious convictions on the boundary line of the public school," Land said.

He expanded, "The ACLU has fostered an attitude of brooding hostility against religion, intimidating citizens by threatening lawsuits. We're glad folks like those in Pontotoc are standing up to that intimidation. We are going to stand with them."

Merrell is director of media and product development, CLC.

GULFSHORE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

JULY 6-8

JULY 10-12

JULY 20-22

JULY 27-29

SESSION I 7:45 p.m.

Swap Shop for Preschool/Children's Workers
Linda Reeves (1) Betty Barber (1)
Don Hicks (2, 3) Linda Scaddel (2, 3)

Hymn Leading in Worship
Jimmy McCaleb

Baptist Men on Mission
Jim Didiak (1) David Langston (2)
Paul Harrell (3) Jerald Welch (4)

The ABCs of Church Budgeting and Promotion
Glen Williams (1, 4) Jay Brister (2, 3)

How To Discover and Use Your Spiritual Gifts
Mose Dangerfield

Start Something New
Don Wilson (1) Neron Smith (2, 3)
Richard Brogan (4)

Sunday School General Officers
Keith Wilkinson (1, 2, 3)
Wayne Edwards (4)

Organizing A Discipleship Training Program
Larry Garner (1, 2, 4) Glenn Shows (3)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1) J. Garland McKee (2, 3)
James Fancher (4)

Leading An Exciting Bible Study
Sean Keith (1, 2) David Tadlock (3)
Jan Halford (4)

Planning To Meet Youth Needs
Wes Pegues (1, 2) Chuck Johnson (3, 4)

Women On Mission
Joan Tyler (1, 3) Lois Henderson (2)
Ashley McCaleb (4)

Ethical Issues and Answers for Today's Adults
Jane Allison (1, 2) Wilda Fancher (3)
Julia Otis (4)

Pastors
Jim Futral (1) John McCall (2)
Rex Yancey (3) Jimmy Porter (4)

Secretaries
Vivian Taylor (1, 3) Tinnie Slade (2, 4)

SESSION II 8:30 a.m.

How To Discover and Use Your Spiritual Gifts
Mose Dangerfield

Using the Bible with Preschoolers
Nancy Bullock (1) Judy Hicks (2, 3, 4)

Making Music with Children
Donna Crum

What Do I Do... As a Girl in Action Leader?
Cheri Smith (1, 3) Jan Polk (2, 4)

Sharing God's Special Plan with Older Children
Angie Boydston (1, 3, 4) Mimi Allen (2)

Keeping Boys and Girls in Bible Drills
Shirley Powell (1) Don Hicks (2, 3, 4)

Teaching Old Dogs... (Can Adults Really Learn?)
Keith Wilkinson (1, 2, 3)
Wayne Edwards (4)

Ministering To The Family
Robin Nichols (1, 3) Larry Garner (2, 4)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1)
J. Garland McKee (2)
James Fancher (3, 4)

Youth Outreach Ideas that Really Work
Sean Keith (1, 2) David Tadlock (3)
Jan Halford (4)

Creative Approaches To Discipling Youth
Wes Pegues (1, 2)
Chuck Johnson (3, 4)

Church Council/ Fundamentals of Church Planning
Matt Buckles (1, 2)
Julius Thompson (3, 4)

Baptist Men on Mission
Jim Didiak (1) David Langston (2)
Paul Harrell (3) Jerald Welch (4)

SESSION III 9:50 a.m.

Association Discipleship Training Team
Mose Dangerfield

What Do I Do... As a Preschool Discipleship Training Leader?
Nancy Bullock (1)
Judy Hicks (2, 3, 4)

Musical Activities for Preschoolers
Donna Crum

Children in Crisis
Cheri Smith (1, 3) Jan Polk (2, 4)

What Do I Do... As a Children's Sunday School Leader?
Angie Boydston (1, 3, 4)
Mimi Allen (2)

Multi-cultural Ministries in Mississippi
Don Wilson (1)
Neron Smith (2, 3)
Richard Brogan (4)

Sunday School ASBIS Team Training
Keith Wilkinson

New Member Training
Larry Garner (1, 2, 4)
Glenn Shows (3)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1)
J. Garland McKee (2)
James Fancher (3, 4)

Involving Teenage Girls in Missions
Lydia Nix (1) Jan Cossitt (2)
Ann Collett (3) Linda Davis (4)

Involving Teenage Boys in Missions
Glenn Shows (1) David Langston (2)
Paul Harrell (3) Jerald Welch (4)

General WMU
Jane Allison (1, 2) Wilda Fancher (3)
Julia Otis (4)

Pastors
Jim Futral (1) John McCall (2)
Rex Yancey (3) Jimmy Porter (4)

Secretaries
Vivian Taylor (1, 3) Tinnie Slade (2, 4)

SESSION IV 11:00 a.m.

Preschool Make It & Take It
Linda Reeves (1) Betty Barber (1)
Linda Scaddel (2, 4) Susan Beckett (3)

TeamKid for Preschoolers
Nancy Bullock (1) Judy Hicks (2, 3, 4)

R.A.s
Glenn Shows (1) David Langston (2)
Paul Harrell (3) Jerald Welch (4)

Who are "Today's Children?"
Cheri Smith (1, 3) Jan Polk (2, 4)

Telling Bible Stories to Children
Angie Boydston (1, 3, 4) Mimi Allen (2)

What Do I Do... As a Children's Discipleship Leader?
Shirley Powell (1) Don Hicks (2, 3, 4)

How To Conduct Weekly Workers' Meetings
Keith Wilkinson (1, 2, 3)
Wayne Edwards (4)

Discipling Adults
Larry Garner (1, 2, 4) Glenn Shows (3)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1)
J. Garland McKee (2)
James Fancher (3, 4)

I Want To Experience God in a Fresh and Personal Way.
Lydia Nix (1) Sean Keith (1, 2)
Wes Pegues (1, 2) Jan Cossitt (2)
Ann Collett (3) David Tadlock (3)
Chuck Johnson (3, 4) Linda Davis (4) Jan Halford (4)

Women On Mission
Joan Tyler (1, 3) Lois Henderson (2)
Ashley McCaleb (4)

Ethical Issues and Answers for Today's Adults
Jane Allison (1, 2) Wilda Fancher (3)
Julia Otis (4)

Pastors
Jim Futral (1) John McCall (2)
Rex Yancey (3) Jimmy Porter (4)

Secretaries
Vivian Taylor (1, 3) Tinnie Slade (2, 4)

Equipping Deacons as Partners in Ministry
Matt Buckles (1, 2)
Thompson (3, 4)

Language Awareness
July 10-12 only
Jennifer Smith

SESSION V 7:45 p.m.

What Do I Do... As a Preschool Sunday School Leader?
Linda Reeves

Missions Development
Don Wilson

Hymn Leading in Worship
Jimmy McCaleb

Musical Activities for Preschoolers
Donna Crum

The ABCs of Church Budgeting and Promotion
Glen Williams (1, 4)
Jay Brister (2, 3)

Telling Bible Stories to Children
Angie Boydston (1, 3, 4)
Mimi Allen (2)

TeamKid for Children
Shirley Powell (1)
Don Hicks (2, 3, 4)

Adult Sunday School Work
Keith Wilkinson (1, 2, 3)
Wayne Edwards (4)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1)
J. Garland McKee (2)
James Fancher (3, 4)

Youth Workers Forum and Fellowship
Lydia Nix (1) Sean Keith (1, 2)
Wes Pegues (1, 2) Glenn Shows (1)
Jan Cossitt (2) Ann Collett (3)
David Tadlock (3) Chuck Johnson (3, 4) Linda Davis (4) Jan Halford (4)

Creative Ministry Ideas for Adults
Joan Tyler (1, 3) Lois Henderson (2)
Ashley McCaleb (4)

Ministers' Wives
Candy Anderson (1, 3)
Betty Davis (2, 4)

Deacon Family Ministry
Matt Buckles (1, 2)
Thompson (3, 4)

Language Awareness
July 10-12 only
Jennifer Smith

SESSION VI 8:30 a.m.

Extended Session... Baby Sitting or Teaching
Linda Reeves

What Do I Do... As a Mission Friends Leader?
Betty Barber (1) Susan Beckett (3)
Linda Scaddel (2, 4)

Using the Bible with Preschoolers
Nancy Bullock (1)
Judy Hicks (2, 3, 4)

Who are "Today's Children?"
Cheri Smith (1, 3) Jan Polk (2, 4)

Reaching People Through the Sunday School
Keith Wilkinson (1, 2, 3)
Wayne Edwards (4)

Ministering To The Family
Robin Nichols (1, 3)
Larry Garner (2, 4)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1)
J. Garland McKee (2)
James Fancher (3, 4)

Youth Mission Projects Near and Far
Lydia Nix (1) Glenn Shows (1)
Jan Cossitt (2) David Langston (2)
Ann Collett (3) Paul Harrell (3)
Linda Davis (4) Jerald Welch (4)

Youth Issues, Trends and the Law
Wes Pegues (1, 2)
Chuck Johnson (3, 4)

Creative Ministry Ideas for Adults
Joan Tyler (1, 3) Ashley McCaleb (4)
Lois Henderson (2)

General WMU
Jane Allison (1, 2) Julia Otis (4)
Wilda Fancher (3)

Pastors
Jim Futral (1) John McCall (2)
Rex Yancey (3) Jimmy Porter (4)

Ministers' Wives
Candy Anderson (1, 3)
Betty Davis (2, 4)

Deacons as Leaders
Matt Buckles (1, 2)
Julius Thompson (3, 4)

Language Awareness
July 10-12 only
Jennifer Smith

SESSION VII 9:50 a.m.

Safety and Security for Preschoolers
Linda Reeves

Who are "Today's Preschoolers?"
Betty Barber (1) Linda Scaddel (2, 3)
Susan Beckett (3)

Making Music with Children
Donna Crum

The ABCs of Church Budgeting and Promotion
Glen Williams (1, 4)
Jay Brister (2, 3)

Criminal Justice Ministry
Don Wilson (1) Neron Smith (2, 3)
Richard Brogan (4)

Introduce Children's Bible Drills 1995-96
Shirley Powell (1) Don Hicks (2, 3, 4)

Building Self-esteem in Your Children
Robin Nichols (1, 3) Larry Garner (2, 4)

WIN School
Steve Jackson (1)
J. Garland McKee (2)
James Fancher (3, 4)

Youth Ministry Lead Teams
Sean Keith (1, 2) David Tadlock (3)
Jan Halford (4)

Dealing With Problem Youth
Wes Pegues (1, 2)
Chuck Johnson (3, 4)

Co-ed Missions for Children and Youth
Glenn Shows (1) David Langston (2)
Paul Harrell (3) Jerald Welch (4)

Pastors
Jim Futral (1) John McCall (2)
Rex Yancey (3) Jimmy Porter (4)

Ministers' Wives
Candy Anderson (1, 3) Betty Davis (2, 4)

ALL SESSIONS

*Barbara Brown—Lab School Coordinator
(Preschool/Children)
Preschool Rooms 101-105
Children Multi-Purpose Room (TeamKid)
Youth Rooms 1 and 2 (LOFT)
1 July 6-8
2 July 10-12
3 July 20-22
4 July 27-29

Just for the Record



Philadelphia Church, Wesson, recognized TeamKids participants on April 2 with a special recognition service and banquet for family members. Ribbons recognizing accomplishments were awarded to participants, who recited the books of the Bible and quoted Scripture. Participants included (back row, from left) Cody Robinson, Garrieth Calcote, Matthew Sanders, Adam Speg, Dustin Case, (middle row, from left) Kyle Wooley, Brandon Warren, Casey Jackson, Hunter Case, Jake St. Amant, Daniel Calcote, (front row, from left) Le'Anna Carter, Jennifer Scroggs, Megan Durr, and Christi Bowman.



First Church, Itta Bena, recently held a Recognition Service for its GAs. Pictured are April Mitchell, Barron Makamson, Brook Sivley, Amy Hardin Murphey, Carley Jefcoat, Mary Fisher Patterson, and Keely Hawkins. Not pictured is Ashley Hopkins. Carol Land is the leader.



Friendship Church, Charleston, recently held a note burning for a new addition to the church, in connection with Super Sunday emphasis that saw the church exceed by 10 people its Sunday School goal of 100 in attendance. Participating in the note burning were (from left) Travis Best, Johnny Lindley, Sam Lott, pastor J.G. Thomas, Jimmy Dale Evans, Raymond Radcliff, and David Carlisle.

First Church, Pecan Grove, will host Wednesday night sessions on the book **Experiencing God** by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. Sessions will be from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. in the church's fellowship hall. Nursery will be provided. For more information, contact pastor Dave Moran at (601) 477-8371 before June 10.

RAs of Big Ridge Church, Biloxi, held a hike for missions. They collected \$736.10 for the



Sylvarena Church, Wesson, dedicated its new building (above) on June 4. Organized in 1898, the building replaces the church's original structure, built in 1904. Church member volunteers demolished the old building last September to make room for the new one, which houses sanctuary, Sunday School rooms, choir loft, and meeting area. Mark Dearman is pastor.

Floyd Riggs of Henderson, Nev., will be the guest speaker at **Hermanville Church, Hermanville**, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., on June 11. Riggs is a former pastor, serving the church from 1990-1992. A covered dish luncheon will follow the morning service. Jim Minnis is pastor.

Parkhill Church, Jackson, will observe its 39th anniversary on June 11. Following the 11 a.m. worship service there will be a covered dish dinner in fellowship hall with special music in the afternoon. Ned Barrett, former member, will preach the morning message. Sam Whittington will be in charge of the music. Tim Roaten is pastor.

Bethlehem Church (Choctaw) will celebrate its 160th birthday on Aug. 27. Dinner on the ground is planned after the 11 a.m. worship service, followed by afternoon singing and "walk down memory lane." For more information, call (601) 773-7043 or (601) 285-6437.

Brandon native awarded degree

F. Charles Mullins Jr. was among 80 individuals awarded degrees during recent commencement exercises at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. Mullins, a Brandon native, received the master of divinity degree. While a seminary student, Mullins served as minister of youth for Loma Vista Church in Kansas City.

Annie Armstrong Home Mission Offering.

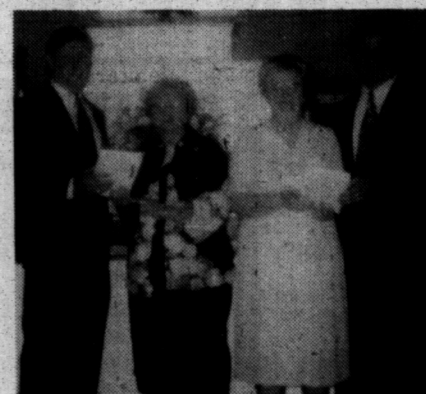
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Oak Hill Church, Union Association, held a note-burning service on May 7. The church celebrated the retirement of the indebtedness on its new building with a special service. Pictured, from left, are Horace Thomas, pastor; Vic Blizzard; Hugh Barkley and Amos Massengill, trustees; and Jerry Garrison, former pastor.



Providence Church, Jayess, recently dedicated the fourth sanctuary built on the same site since the church was founded in 1847. Building committee members included (from left) chairman Elton Bullock, Buck Daley, Bettye Price, Faye Bullock, pastor Mike Alexander, Juanita Beard, and Tommy Dewitt.



Rocky Creek Church (George) was recently presented with 350 new hymnals in memory of deceased members. Pastor Jerry Mixon (left) accepted 300 hymnals from Dot Hedegaard (second from left), in memory of Buck and Angelyn Strickland; music/youth minister J.R. Walley (right) accepted 50 hymnals from Ester Welford (second from right) in memory of Johnnie Welford.

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The newly elected members of the Executive Council for the Mississippi State University Baptist Student Union, seated, from left, are Tom Wiley, worship/study, Jackson; Bonnie Barker, vice-president, Madison; Kara Kirschbaum, missions, Abilene, Texas; Amy Ledlow, intramurals, West Point; Lendon Campbell, community missions, Jackson; Paige Cathey, fine arts, Natchez; and Joey Beeson, student center, Brookhaven. Also, standing, from left, are Blake Thames, outreach events, Hattiesburg; Michelle Barlow, social, Clinton; Michael Smith, international students, Tupelo; Brad White, discipleship, Starkville; June C. Scoggins, associate BSU director; Ken Watkins, BSU director; Rob Smith, president, DeKalb; Dawn Sumner, publicity, Noxapater; and Betty Ann Crume, African-American ministry, Aberdeen.

Homecomings

Smyrna, Hazlehurst: June 11; 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds following worship services; L.C.

Anthony, Prentiss, former pastor, guest speaker; Curtis Alston, Byram, music; Jimmy Etheridge, gospel concert, 1:30 p.m. Tom Littlejohn, pastor.

Bowlin, Sallis: June 11; 11 a.m.; dinner, noon; Walter Hines, former pastor, guest speaker; V.B. Keith, music director; and Mary Roberts, piano.

New Hope (Lafayette): June 11; 11 a.m.; lunch in fellowship hall at noon; Troy Defer, pastor, speaker for morning services; Ricky and Cheryl Martin, guest singers.

Revival Results

Mesa, Tylertown: April 23-28; Max Pharris, Magee's Creek, evangelist; John H. Tucker, pastor; 11 professions of faith.

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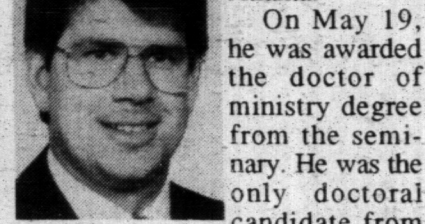
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Green completes Rice doctorate

David D. Green, pastor of Cedar Grove Church, Columbia, recently completed his doctoral work at Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta.



Green

On May 19, he was awarded the doctor of ministry degree from the seminary. He was the only doctoral candidate from Mississippi. He also holds the master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary.

Schmitz receives seminary degree

Blue Mountain College graduate Burton Alan Schmitz of Carrollton was awarded the master of divinity degree May 19 from Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. He is presently a resident of San Diego and is serving as associate pastor and minister to families at First Church, Sonoma, Calif.

Neely Church celebrates 150

Neely Church, Greene Association, will mark its 150th anniversary beginning with a fellowship/fun day on June 24 at 5 p.m. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be served to accompany activities at the church.

On Sunday, June 25, Sunday School will begin at 10 a.m.; worship will begin at 11 a.m. Former pastor Larue Stephens, now pastor of McDowell Road Church, Jackson, will be guest speaker.

A lunch will be served after the morning services, and afternoon services will begin at 1:30. Retired pastor Byron Mathis of Long Beach will be guest speaker for the afternoon service.

For more information, contact the church's homecoming committee at P.O. Box 304, Neely, MS 39461; telephone (601) 525-3855. Charles Garner is pastor.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

In a fit of rage, I killed our family pet. Now my children won't have anything to do with me. How can I make it up to them?

Rage is a serious issue, because rage is anger out of control. Anger is not getting things "my way," or having to cope alone with hurt. Talk with your minister, a therapist, or a close friend about the reasons you get so angry. The power of anger can be very destructive. Anger alerts us that something is not right with us. I doubt you awoke on that day and said to yourself, "I think I'll kill the family pet," but the manner in which you reacted to the circumstances of that day produced a great deal of hurt and grief. Deal with the issues that generate your anger, and deal with them soon. When your children observe you dealing honestly with these issues, and they see your remorse and repentance, they will learn to trust again and feel more at ease around you. Give them time to grieve the loss of not only their pet, but a loving parent as well. Get involved in good outlets such as exercise and hobbies that will reduce the stress in your life. Make good friends. Above all, bring the hurt to the Father who loves you, and let him help you carry your burdens as you seek answers.

I don't gamble, but I often eat in casino restaurants. What's wrong with that?

If there is doubt, don't do it. As Christians, we have been "called to freedom" (Gal. 5:1), but we also have the responsibility to set an example for others. The question of eating in a casino is not the issue as much as the activities you are supporting by your presence (1 Cor. 8:8-13). Our world teaches us to compromise and not take a strong stand for right. Eating food is not wrong, but what does your presence in a casino say to others? Christians and non-Christians? How can others know for sure that all you did was eat a meal? 1 Thessalonians 5:22 encourages us to "Avoid every kind of evil." One translation even includes "... the appearance of evil." God's people are to go into the world and bring light into the darkness; if that is the reason you go to a casino (or any other questionable place), then be sure your motive is pure and divinely led of God. Talk with a close Christian friend whose values are similar to yours, and find out how he/she feels about your actions. Accountability to someone else will help you maintain your strong Christian stand.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Staff Changes

Walter Simmons has resigned as pastor of Westside Church, Bruce, in Calhoun County, to accept the pastorate of Furrs Church, Pontotoc County.



Simmons

Hickory Church, Newton Association, has called **Mark Sellers**, Clinton, as activities minister. His previous place of service was youth intern at First Church, Jackson. A native of Tylertown, he is a

junior at Mississippi College.

Highland Colony Church, Ridgeland, has called **Raymond Ball** as minister of music, effective June 11. His previous place of service was Fairview Church, Selma, Ala. Ball, a graduate of Mississippi College and Southwestern Seminary, has also served Harrisville Church, Harrisville, and Woodville Heights Church, Jackson.



Ball

Randall Jackson of Sturgis was called as pastor of **Tangipahoa Church, Summit.** His previous place of service was Emmaus Church, Tickfaw, La. He is a graduate of Mississippi State University and New Orleans Seminary.



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Mississippians who received doctoral degrees May 19 from New Orleans Seminary include (front row, from left) Elbert Charpie III, Pascagoula, doctor of ministry; David Adkins, Union, doctor of philosophy; Jimmy Williams, Oxford, doctor of ministry; Rob Paul Jr., doctor of ministry; (back row, from left) Dennis Trull, Sledge/Tunica, doctor of ministry; David Grumbach, Meridian, doctor of ministry; Landrum P. Leavell, seminary president; and Whit Holmes, Gulfport, doctor of education.

NOBTS awards degrees to students with state ties

Mississippians graduating from New Orleans Seminary on May 19 were:

Master of Divinity

Dale Roberts, Biloxi; Ramona Gay Trim, Jackson; Franklin F. Green, Brookhaven; Paul D. Wilbourn, West Point; Lisa A. Wilbourn, Bay, St. Louis; Sylvie T. Raquel, France/Gulfport; Charles Richard Wheat, Greenwood; Jeffery Birl Rimes, Pascagoula; Charles (Mac) Burrell, Winona; Paul Brashier, Lucedale; Kevin Cooper, Morton/Petal; Paul Terry Crowley, Long Beach; Thomas P.

Jamieson, Slayden; Claude O'Shedrick Persons Jr., Clinton; Robert (Buddy) Landry Jr., Biloxi; Richard L. Davis, Hattiesburg; Donnie Reynolds, Picayune; Christopher H. Aldridge, Tupelo.

Master of Music

Susan L. Lofton, Gautier.

Master of Church Music

Jae Gyu Ahn, South Korea/Biloxi.

Bachelor of General Studies

Buddy L. Peters, Lumberton; Hugh Edwin Robinson, Hattiesburg.

Revival Dates

Heucks Retreat, Brookhaven: June 11-13; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Jay Richardson, Greenville, evangelist.

Faith, Silver Creek: June 11-14; Sunday, 11 a.m.; covered dish dinner in fellowship hall; afternoon services, 1 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ken Harrison, New Hebron, evangelist; James Ellis Netherland, Pearl, music; John Jones, pastor.

Macedonia, Mendenhall: June 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m. worship; covered dish lunch; dedication of new sanctuary,

1:15 p.m.; Sun.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Robert Sones, D'Lo, evangelist; Charles M. Case Sr., pastor.

Oak Grove (Scott): June 11-14; Sunday, 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; David Langston, Brandon, evangelist; Ted Jones, Lake, music; Victor Vaughn, pastor.

Smyrna, Hazlehurst: June 12-14; 7 p.m. nightly; evangelists are Leroy Brewer, New Zion (Copiah) Mon.; Clark Stewart, Harmony (Copiah) Tues.; and Tom Littlejohn, pastor of Smyrna Church, Wed.; Curtis Alston, Byram, music.

Vacation Bible Schools

First Church of Runnelstown, Petal: June 12-16; 8 a.m.-11 a.m.; nursery through 6th grade; Debbie Creel, director.

First, Pecan Grove: June 11-16; 6-8:30 p.m.; children through 6th grade; commencement, 7 p.m., June 17.

Longview, Starkville: June 12-

16; 6-8 p.m.; ages 3-12; commencement, June 18, 5 p.m.; Donald Pouns, pastor.

First, Collinsville: June 12-16; 8:30-11:30 a.m.; parade, Sat., June 10, 1 p.m.

Good Hope (Panola): June 12-16; 9-11:30 a.m.; preschool through youth.

LEWIS

From page 3

agency council which the home and foreign mission boards have presently. "But to formalize the council in the way suggested and tie it so intimately to the SBC Executive Committee is, I believe, quite a different matter."

Lewis also took issue with additional points of the proposal including:

— "The new name North American Mission Board is neither totally descriptive nor inclusive. We have missions work in the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands. Although Mexico is part of North America, it is assigned to the Foreign Mission Board."

Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, reacted sharply to the memorandum sent by Lewis.

"It is regrettable that the president of the HMB does not support the report of the Program and Structure Study Committee, but this does not lessen the strong belief of the committee members that it is important for our Southern Baptist people from local churches across this country to decide the wisdom of the report," Chapman told Baptist Press in a four-page response to the Lewis memorandum. "The PSSC members realize the magnitude of the suggested changes but are convinced that adoption of the report is critical to the future of the SBC."

Chapman said the formation of the NAMB is the "new organizational dynamic which drives the whole proposal because of the report's focus on reaching the world for Christ." The concept brings together "three great entities" in the SBC with the "singular purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission in a manner not experienced by any denomination in history," he said.

Chapman said Lewis' memorandum places the emphasis of the report on cost efficiency. But, Chapman said, the PSSC members say Southern Baptists are compelled to ask the question "Are we financially driven or vision pulled?"

Lewis misinterprets the ministry assignments of the NAMB, Chapman charged.

"He says, 'Our (HMB) job is to assist the churches, not do their witnessing for them.' In the PSSC report each ministry assignment of the North American Mission Board begins with the words, 'Assist churches.' In discussing this issue, Dr. Lewis uses terms like 'seem to minimize important relationships we have with associations, state conventions, and the churches themselves as partners in the mission task.' Nothing could be further from the minds of committee members.

"The entire work of the committee was done within the scope of the cooperative spirit of this denomination," Chapman said.

Chapman said Lewis' characterization of the Great Commis-

sion Council as an interagency council with authoritative powers is in error.

Chapman also took issue with Lewis' interpretation of the Great Commission Council in the PSSC report.

"A statement in the PSSC report reads, 'The Great Commission Council will advise the Convention and its Executive Committee concerning mission issues, needs and advance.' The word 'advise' is in the context of informing for the purpose of making needs and issues known to the Southern Baptist family."

"The statement in the report does not imply a new authoritative role for the Executive Committee. It simply recognizes that agencies of the Convention do communicate their needs to the Convention, often through the Executive Committee," Chapman said.

Responding to Lewis' concerns regarding the relationship between the HMB and state conventions as defined in the PSSC report, Chapman said the report "encourages" the idea of state conventions increasing their roles in funding internal mission strategies "but the committee is aware that they cannot instruct the state conventions how to direct their budgets."

Chapman also took exception to Lewis' contention the proposal would set a new direction away from cooperation between the states and the SBC, using "direct" missions instead of "cooperative" missions.

"Again, nothing could be further from the truth. The committee members are products of the cooperative spirit which exists within the SBC. They have a clear under-

standing of the importance of the Convention's cooperation with state conventions, associations, and churches."

Responding to Lewis' contention that the members of the PSSC do not have "very much experience or expertise in missions," Chapman reacted sharply.

"I am certain that Southern Baptist pastors will be disappointed to read (that the PSSC members) are not qualified to address the subject. Every individual on the committee has been actively engaged in missions through their local churches. The two pastors and one associate pastor on the committee serve churches with great missions and evangelism records. They live missions and evangelism every day."

Chapman, responding to Lewis' criticism that the PSSC went beyond the scope of its assignment, said the PSSC followed procedures and has "functioned with no illusions."

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Uniform Whom will you follow?



By Greg Potts
1 Kings 18

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Joshua's challenge to the nation of Israel to "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

Jesus closed the Sermon on the Mount with a challenge to all who had heard him teach to build their lives and homes upon the solid rock of his teaching as opposed to the shifting sands on which many lives are built (Matt. 7:24-27).

When God gathered the nation of Israel around Mount Sinai, he used Moses to challenge the people of Israel to live for him and be faithful to him. If they did so, he would bless them. If not, they would be punished.

The Bible is filled with challenges from God and his messengers for the people of Israel, and Christians today, to live for him. In our text, we find one of the greatest stories of challenge in the Bible. Elijah and the prophets of Baal are engaged in a showdown on Mount Carmel.

There had been a severe drought in Samaria. Elijah confronted Ahab, the wicked king who accused Elijah of troubling Israel and blamed him for the drought Israel was experiencing. Upon hearing this, Elijah challenged Ahab to meet him on Mt. Carmel along with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah.

Elijah told the prophets of Baal they would be given one ox to place on the altar and Elijah would do the same. Neither Elijah nor the prophets of Baal would put fire under the altar. Then, the prophets of Baal would call upon Baal, and Elijah would call upon God. Whichever answered would be considered the true God.

The prophets of Baal prepared their ox and began calling on the name of Baal. They did so from morning until noon. They began to dance around the altar — still, no response. At this point, Elijah began to taunt them and they yelled even louder with no response. It was obvious that Baal would not respond.

Then it was Elijah's turn. Elijah dug a trench around the altar and instructed the people to pour four pitchers of water on the ox and wood. Twelve full pitchers of water were poured on the ox and wood. Obviously, it would be extremely difficult to light fire under the altar. But, our God is a God of the impossible and it was about to be proven!

Elijah prayed and God sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. When the people saw this they cried out, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God." Elijah had proven there was only one true God in Israel — Jehovah God.

What god or gods are you serving? Why should you serve the Lord?

He is available. When the prophets of Baal needed their god, he didn't answer. You will find this to be true of many of the gods people serve today. Where is the liquor industry when a drunk driver takes the life of an innocent person? Where are the drug dealers when an innocent child is gunned down in the ghetto? Where is the young man, who told a young woman that if she loved him she would have sex with him, when she discovers she is pregnant? In each case, they are nowhere to be found.

He is able. Throughout the Bible we read of God's power. From the creation of heavens and the earth to the parting of the Red Sea to the crumbling of the walls of Jericho to the virgin birth of Jesus we see God's power.

This is seen in our story. Against odds, God sent fire from heaven and consumed the sacrifice to prove to everyone gathered on Mt. Carmel that he is God.

He is authentic. There are many gods who masquerade as the true god. Jesus warned of false messiahs who would come after his ascension to heaven. Jesus' prophecy has been fulfilled numerous times, as false messiahs have appeared since the beginning of time and will continue to come until the return of our Lord. Our text clearly teaches God is the one, true God.

Our lesson asks, "Whom will we follow?" Who are you following today? Is it Jesus, or some other lord? Is it self, money, job, or maybe even family? We should put the Lord first in everything. When we do, Jesus takes care of the rest (Matt. 6:33).

Potts is pastor, First Church, Vancleave.

Bible Book Teachings on the future



By Sylvia Fleming
Mark 13

As Jesus was about to begin his Olivet discourse, the disciples were busy pointing out the marvels of the temple. In spite of all the evil Herod did, he built a magnificent temple. It covered a 40-acre area, took 10 years to build, required 10,000 slaves, and many skilled Roman experts. Its length was approximately five football fields; and it was approximately 1,000 feet wide. The stones were "... from three to 30 feet long and from three to six feet high. [Their weights ranged]... from one to 40 tons each" (Israel My Glory, June/July, 1990, p. 15).

Considering the size and structure of the temple, how amazed the disciples must have been when Jesus said, "... There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be torn down" (v. 2).

Jesus in his omniscience knew that in 70 A.D., Titus, the Roman general, would come into Jerusalem and destroy the temple, leaving not one stone upon the other. Thus, the prophecy would be fulfilled. All the sacred treasures were carried into Rome. By 73 A.D., there was no evidence of Jewish self-rule (Packer, et al, *The Bible Almanac*, p. 186).

According to Robert Anderson, on April 6, 32 A.D., the first 483 years of God's dealing specifically with the Jews came to an end (*The Most High God*, Showers, p. 124). That day was the one known as the Triumphal Entry. Thus, God would deal with the church until its rapture. Consequently, the Olivet discourse refers to the future dealings of God with the Jews.

The disciples wanted to know what the sign of the end of the age would be. They were aware that the Messianic Age could not come to pass until the present age ended. In verses 5-8, the first part of the tribulation is dealt with. Because Israel will have signed a false peace treaty with the antichrist there will be no war in Israel; thus, they "... shall hear of wars and rumors of wars." It still will not be time for the end yet.

The devastation will not be centered in Israel until the middle of the tribulation when the abomination of desolation takes place. The abomination of desolation will be that future time when the antichrist will set his image in the Holy of Holies in the temple. The true sign to the end of the age shall be at the end of the tribulation when all shall be darkened (Matt. 24:29).

Thus, the appropriate setting is staged by the almighty God to present his Son. The people of the tribulation shall look up and in the midst of all the darkness shall see the tremendous contrast between the immense darkness and the brilliance of the *shekinah* glory; they shall "... see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 24:30).

As the Christians know to watch and be ready for Christ's snatching away of the church — his bride — so are the Jews warned that no one will know the exact time of Christ's return to earth. Consequently, those tribulation saints are encouraged to endure to the end, to watch, and to pray.

Oh, but why wait! The lost should accept Jesus now. One should never expect to deny him now and have a second chance during those horrendous seven years. The Bible states that anyone who "... received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved... God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie" (2 Thes. 2:10, 11). Woe to those who deny salvation through Jesus; those who are waiting for a later date are those who will be deluded.

Fleming is an English teacher and member of Harmony Church, Louisville.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION • 150 YEARS



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Life and Work Answering hostility



By Michael Johnson
Acts 21-23

Paul had returned from his last missionary journey bringing the offerings collected along the way to the church in Jerusalem.

Paul always identified himself as one who would be "unto the Jews... Jew" (1 Cor. 9:20). It is therefore not surprising to find Paul visiting the temple.

Jews from Asia (21:27) who were probably not Christians but ones who had stood against Paul in Ephesus were also at the temple and outraged to see Paul in this holy place. Whether it was misinformation on their part or a malicious intent to hurt Paul, the word went out that Paul had brought Greeks (non-Jews) into the temple area. A riot ensued.

This charge, of course, was very serious. In 1871 archaeologists discovered a limestone block in the temple area with the following words in Greek and Latin: "Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whosoever is taken so doing will be the cause that death overtaketh him." In essence, Paul was being charged with defiling the temple (21:28) and the penalty was death!

No doubt Paul would have been killed by the mob if not for the intercession of the Roman soldiers who were on permanent assignment at the Fortress of Antonia, adjacent to the temple. The tribune seeking to establish order separated Paul from the mob and demanded to know what had happened (21:33). Everyone, however, tried to speak at once and Paul, addressing the tribune in Greek, asked for permission to speak to the crowd.

Facing hostility (21:31). Paul was no stranger to opposition. In 2 Corinthians 11 we read a long litany of sufferings Paul endured as an apostle of Jesus Christ. It is instructive to examine how Paul reacted when he was not readily accepted by those he encountered. Note how Paul was the only calm one in the crowd. There was no panic or frenzied cry. He simply and rather politely asked for permission to speak. More than Paul's demeanor, we also learn something about his determination. Paul belonged to Christ; preaching the gospel, even to those who sought to hurt him, was more important than his personal safety. What kind of determination do we have?

Building bridges (22:2-3). Paul knew his audience and started where they were. He identified with them as Jews and presented his credentials in a clear and unassuming way. Wouldn't others be more willing to listen to us if we would just first take the time to get to know them? And as the occasion presents itself, wouldn't people be willing to share more of themselves with us if we would only share something about ourselves first?

Being a faithful witness (22:6-8). Paul unashamedly shared his encounter with the risen Lord on the Damascus Road. This was his testimony; it happened to him; it cannot be disputed. We, too, need to always be ready to share our testimony in a clear and forthright manner.

Receiving a hostile response (22:21-22). Paul held his audience until he came to the word "Gentiles" in verse 22. His mission was to preach to the Gentiles and this was something the Jews could not fathom.

While the word Gentile does not carry such meaning to us today, we should understand that there will be some words or subjects that will cause our listeners to stop hearing. Like Paul we should not be afraid to confront these issues, but we should also seek to discover how to approach these subjects in a way that leads to further discussion as opposed to resistance.

Experiencing God's presence (23:11). Lloyd Ogilvie correctly points out in his commentary that just because Paul was facing hostility did not mean that he was out of the Lord's will, but that he was following the Lord's guidance. As we face periods of uncertainty that will occur from time to time, we can, like Paul, have the assurance that God is with us. We may not hear a voice, but through Scripture, a sermon, comment from a friend, or some other source, we can experience such a spirit of reassurance that there will be no doubt we are doing his will and able to say with Paul, "The Lord spoke to me!"

Johnson is associate professor of Christian education at Mississippi College, Clinton.

capsules

BAPTISTS REACH 99.9% OF '94 LOTTIE MOON GOAL: RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptists increased their giving to the 1994 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering by about \$3 million over the year before and came short by \$67,402 — or a mere .08% — of their goal, which hasn't been met since 1981. The figures, released June 2 by the Foreign Mission Board, showed the final tally even surpassed the board's March '10 projections by nearly a half million dollars. The 1994 Lottie Moon offering goal was \$86 million. When the books closed May 31, giving stood at a record \$85,932,597.88 — 99.92% of the goal. The 3.66% increase over 1993 represents the largest annual jump since 1988 and the closest Southern Baptists have drawn to the goal since they met it in 1981.

BWA WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT 1995 MEETING LARGEST EVER: McLEAN, Va. (BP) — Women from 93 countries or geographic entities have registered for the 1995 BWA Women's Department "Reunion of Baptist Women" July 31 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The reunion will be held prior to the 17th Baptist World Congress in Buenos Aires, Aug. 1-6. It is also part of the department's July 28-31 leadership conference for a selected 400 continental and national leaders of Baptist women's organizations. Planners expect the July 31 event to draw 3,000 people to the Grand Rex Theater in downtown Buenos Aires.

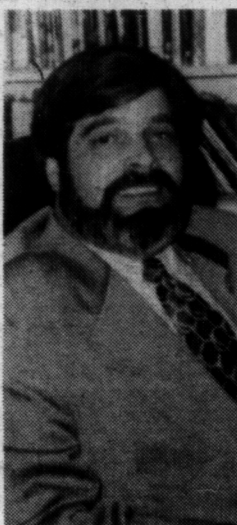
OKLAHOMA DIRECTORS CUT SBC'S SHARE OF CP FUNDS: OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. (ABP) — Directors of the General Convention of Oklahoma voted unanimously May 30-31 to cut the portion of Cooperative Program gifts forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention. A proposed 1996 budget for the state convention anticipates income of \$17.9 million. If the unified budget is approved by Oklahoma Baptists in their state convention this fall, 60% of those funds will remain in the state while 40% is forwarded to the SBC. Last year, the SBC received \$7.3 million from Oklahoma, or a 42% share of the state budget of \$17.4 million. With the cut, the national body would stand to receive \$7.16 million from Oklahoma in 1996. "Missions do not just occur 'over there.' They occur in Oklahoma," said Allen McHam, chairman of the budget subcommittee and pastor of First Church of Perry.

BSSB TRUSTEES TO MEET DURING SBC IN ATLANTA: NASHVILLE (BP) — A special meeting of the trustees of the Baptist Sunday School Board has been called for Wednesday afternoon, June 21, in Atlanta to consider candidates for two vacant vice presidential positions, according to BSSB President James T. Draper Jr. The meeting will be held at the Georgia World Congress Center during the afternoon the convention is in recess.

HEART ATTACK KILLS MISSION VOLUNTEER: ST. JOHNS, Antigua (BP) — Southern Baptist foreign mission volunteer Phillip Knott died May 30 of a massive heart attack on the Caribbean island of Nevis. Knott, 54, of Swan Quarter, N.C., was serving a three-month stint as pastor of First Baptist Church of Brick-kiln on Nevis. He had been there since May 1. The day before his death, he told Foreign Mission Board missionary John Hamilton how excited he was about the work there. On the afternoon of his death, Knott apparently complained of indigestion and appeared to respond to treatment at a local clinic, Hamilton said. As plans were being made to evacuate him from the island, Knott took a turn for the worse and died quickly thereafter. Born in Louisburg, N.C., Knott was a graduate of Hardbarger Business College in Raleigh and Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest. He pastored three churches in eastern North Carolina before accepting a two-year volunteer International Service Corps assignment to pastor a church in Japan in the early 1990s. He most recently served as supply preacher for Rose Bay Baptist Church in Swan Quarter. Knott is survived by his wife Karen; two children, Christine Avery and Charles Glen; two brothers and two sisters.

BROTHERHOOD'S CARPENTER SHOP HITS THE ROAD: COVINGTON, Tenn. (BP) — The Brotherhood's exhibit during the June 20-22 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta will be the first stop for the agency's mobile woodworking shop, the Carpenter Shop. Brainchild of M.B. Howard, 71, of Covington, Tenn., the Carpenter Shop will soon tour the nation building quality, affordable furniture for churches in need. The exhibit is housed in a 14-foot trailer equipped with everything a furniture craftsman needs — from drill presses to table saws. Baptist Builder volunteers will transform the trailer into a furniture factory on-site at churches or associations around the country. Faith Baptist Church in Mexico will be the recipient of the fruits of the Carpenter Shop's first road trip. Volunteer members of Baptist Builders in Covington, including George Smith, helped construct 12 pews, two deacons' benches, a Lord's Supper table, and a pulpit for the church in Smith's barn. Smith says the way he sees it, his barn is his Sunday School classroom. "I can't teach, but I can build furniture. I think God wants you to do what you can to serve him. This is how I do it," Smith said.

Before



After



All for the cause

Phil Smith, minister of music and youth at Calvary Church, Cleveland, recently set a new standard in the field of "sacrificing for missions." To raise funds for the church's summer youth mission trip, Smith allowed the congregation to vote on whether he should keep his beard. Balloting was done by placing money in jars marked "Keep It" or "Shave It." Smith even upped the challenge by promising to get a crew

cut if \$1,500 was raised, and to allow the donors and youth to do the whole job if \$2,000 was raised. When the dust from the heated contest settled, \$2,700 had been raised. The (formerly) burly Smith was obliged to submit to the blade, but he didn't mind at all. "Let them have it. Our mission trip is completely paid for and it was worth it. God truly does work in mysterious ways," he said.

Southern Baptists around the world aid Chechnya refugees

GROZNY, Chechnya (BP) — Baptists in war-ravaged Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, continue to minister despite the death and destruction around them, say two Southern Baptist missionaries who visited there.

The First Baptist Church of Grozny, for example, is still standing and functioning. The church is the main point for relief ministry in that country.

The church now provides a shelter for the homeless and the refuge where others in need could find help. Baptist World Aid has contributed more than \$10,000 (U.S.) to relief funds for refugees in Chechnya.

Jack Shelby and Norman Lytle, both based in Moscow, visited Grozny and Vladikavkaz (also known as Ordzhonikidze), about 70 miles away, to evaluate refugee needs and the use of Southern Baptist hunger relief funds. They traveled with Michael Zhidkov, a Russian Baptist leader, and Boris Godunov, a Russian Baptist photographer.

The team made the trip in late April, but the report was only

recently made available.

The visitors brought away vivid memories of bombed buildings, sniper fire, land mines, and bodies of victims slain in the fighting.

Chechnya is a small, predominantly Muslim republic in the Russian federation located east of the Black Sea. Russian troops attacked when leaders there declared independence. Intense fighting has dragged on for months.

Before the fighting broke out, there were about 300 Baptists in Chechnya, about two-thirds of them in Grozny. Today only about 150 Baptists remain in the war-ravaged city. Two Baptist women, ages 60 and 80, were killed when Russian troops pounded Grozny with artillery shells. About 20 homes of Baptists have been destroyed.

"It is a miracle that one of the few houses which was not destroyed is the Baptist church," said Karl Heinz Walter, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, on a recent visit to Chechnya.

The Foreign Mission Board

appropriated \$50,000 in February to help war refugees in the region. The money — sent in five installments — is being used by Baptists in Grozny and by Vladikavkaz Baptist Church in Vladikavkaz and North Ossetian Christian Mission in Ossetia. Both congregations are led by Baptist pastor Peter Lunichkin. About 70,000 refugees from Georgia, Ingushetia, and Chechnya are in Ossetia, a state adjacent to Chechnya.

"Over and over, the people in Grozny expressed their gratitude for our help. Tearfully they told us how grateful they were that we had come to visit them in their time of trouble," Shelby said.

Funds for relief for Chechnya refugees can be sent to Baptist World Aid via the Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran Street, McLean, VA 22101-6005. Telephone: (703) 790-8980. Or contact the Foreign Mission Board, (804) 353-0151.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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FXDSEX: LUTCLJ-CVCT: LUI

This week's clue: S equals L.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Exodus Eight: One.

Baptist Record

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